

News Release

Washington State Department of Ecology
Washington State Department of Health
Cowlitz County Emergency Management

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AGENCIES RESPOND TO WEYERHAEUSER ODOR PROBLEM

Longview, WA -- A chemical spill yesterday at Weyerhaeuser's Longview mill has spread a foul odor over hundreds of square miles in western Washington and western Oregon. Cowlitz County emergency officials, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Washington State Department of Health are investigating the problem.

The odor, which resembles cat urine, has prompted complaints from residents as far north as Olympia, as far south as Portland, and as far west as Astoria and Long Beach. The odor comes from 8,700 gallons of sulfate turpentine which was spilled at the Weyerhaeuser mill yesterday.

The Washington State Department of Health said the odor is easily detected by humans and can cause short-term health effects including nausea, dizziness, headaches, and eye and throat irritation, and chest pain. Based on current information, health experts do not expect long-term health effects. Persons experiencing health effects are advised to seek medical advice.

Weyerhaeuser told investigators that the material has not spilled into the nearby Columbia River, but instead is in a holding pond on the mill site. Gasses released because of evaporation of the material has apparently caused the widespread odor. The company has retained a cleanup contractor to start removing the material from the holding pond. Weyerhaeuser estimates that cleanup will take at least until the end of today.

